

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN JO 04209 040028Z

67

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

CU-02 SCA-01 JUSE-00 SEC-01 IO-10 /076 W

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P 032330Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1635

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 4209

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CS

SUBJECT: EXTRADITION LAW MATTERS:

ASSEMBLY ACTION AND VICE-PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

REF: SAN JOSE 4165 AND PREVIOUS

1. YET ANOTHER ATTEMPT BY MINORITY DEPUTIES TO GIVE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION TO EXTRADITION REFORM BILL THAT CALLS FOR REPEAL OF 1974 COSTA RICAN EXTRADITION LAW (VESCO LAW) FAILED IN ASSEMBLY OCTOBER 2 BY 22-28 VOTE. THREE PLN (OF 28), FOUR UN (OF 11), THE PNI AND THE PRD BLOCS, AND OTHER INDEPENDENTS (INCLUDING SIGURD KOBERG, A CONSERVATIVE WITH KNOWN VESCO CONNECTIONS) WERE IN THE LOSING MINORITY. NEGATIVE VOTES WERE PLN, UN/PAQUISTA, AND TWO COMMUNIST. DEBATE WAS HARSH AND LASTED ENTIRE SESSION; U.S. EMBASSY WAS MENTIONED BY VERY FEW DEPUTIES, AND ONLY IN PASSING -- EXCEPT FOR COMMUNIST DEPUTY WHO CALLED FOR EXPULSION OF BOTH VESCO AND AMBASSADOR.

2. VOTE IS SIGNIFICANT IN ITS REFLECTION OF STRENGTH

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PAGE 02 SAN JO 04209 040028Z

OF VESCO FORCES IN ASSEMBLY-- BUT IT IS NOT NECESSARILY

LAST WORD. THE MAJORITY BILL TO REFORM THE EXTRADITION LAW OF 1974 IS STILL ON THE ASSEMBLY AGENDA; WITH THE DEFEAT OF THE MEASURE TO GIVE THE MINORITY BILL PRIORITY, THAT BILL WILL BE DEBATED IN THE ASSEMBLY IN THE ACCUSTOMED ORDER--AFTER THE MAJORITY BILL. THE QUESTION IS WHEN. ONE HIGH, ANTI-VESCO, PLN OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFFS THAT DEBATE COULD COME OVER NEXT DAYS, BUT OTHER PRIORITY LEGISLATION COULD WELL BE INTRODUCED, AND, AS THE SUPPORTERS OF THE MINORITY BILL FEAR, THE EXTRADITION BILLS PROGRESSIVELY POSLONED (AS WAS CASE IN LAST YEAR'S ASSEMBLY). STILL TO BE DETERMINED IN ALL OF THIS, OF COURSE, ARE FINAL POSITIONS OFPLN FRACTION AND ODUBER GOVERNMENT.

3. IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, OCTOBER 3 EXCELSIOR CARRIED COMMENTS BY VICE-PRESIDENT CARLOS MANUEL CASTILLO IN WHICH CASTILLO CONFIRMS THERE HAS BEEN A LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR TODMAN TO PRESIDENT ODUBER WITH SUGGESTIONS ON "CHANGES IN THE EXTRADITION LAW," BUT DENIES THAT SUCH COMMENTS SIGNIFY U.S. INTROMISSION IN COSTA RICAN AFFAIRS. CASTILLO IS QUOTED: "ALTHOUGH I HAVE NOT STUDIED THE LETTER (WHICH CONTAINS THE SUGGESTIONS), I BELIEVE THAT THAT IS NORMAL IN RELATIONS BETWEEN COUNTRIES THAT HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND EXCHANGE POINTS OF VIEW." HE ADDED THAT SUCH SUGGESTIONS ARE NO MORE "INTROMISSION" THAN ARE THE SUGGESTIONS MANY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAVE MADE TO THE U.S. TO CHANGE THE U.S. TRADE ACT.

4. COMMENT: THE DEFEAT OF THE MINORITY ATTEMPT TO GIVE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION TO THEIR BILL IS NO SURPRISE (REFTEL). THE UNANSWERED QUESTION ABOUT THE EXTRADITION LAW REMAINS WHAT IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN--WHEN AND IF THE PLN AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE MAJORITY BILL TO REFORM THE 1974 LAW.

5. COMMENT: CASTILLO'S REMARKS COUPLED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S (SAN JOSE 4082) DENYING THE CHARGE OF U.S. "INTROMISSION" SHOULD SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. WHETHER THE VESCO/FIGUERES-CONTROLLED MEDIA WILL CONTINUE TO IGNORE OR TO SLANT THIS TYPE OF NEWS IN SUBSEQUENT COVERAGE
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PAGE 03 SAN JO 04209 040028Z

AND COMMENT, HOWEVER, IS ANOTHER MATTER. USING PAST PERFORMANCE AS AN INDICATOR, THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO DISTORT.
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